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Microorganisms play a key role in soil function by:

- Producing enzymes such as those involved in recycling nutrients needed for plant growth;
- Synthesis of humic substances;
- Decomposition of plant residues;
- Soil aggregate formation;
- N₂-fixation;
- Increasing plant nutrient and water uptake under mycorrhizal-plant associations;
- Soil detoxification upon degradation of xenobiotics (i.e., pesticides).